

RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTS

INTRODUCTION

We've all experienced being in awkward and unwelcoming settings, such as restaurants, car repair shops, doctor's offices or even sporting events. On the other hand, we also know what a good environment can do for our overall enjoyment. The right setting can make all the difference. Most of us have an idea of what church should be like: the music, the lights, and especially the sermon. We can predict so much about church, and so can the people who don't attend. How can we make our church appealing, engaging and helpful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give examples of environments you have experienced that were consistent with their purpose. Give examples of some environments that were not consistent. Why are environments, including atmosphere, people, and physical settings so important?
2. Read Acts 17:16-34. How was Paul using the environment he had to communicate God with his audience?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. What was Paul's attitude in these verses about reaching people? How might we apply these verses for us today?
4. Do you agree with the statement, "If we want to be a church that is effective at reaching our culture we have to use the culture to do it?" Why or why not?
5. How can the church be appealing, engaging, and helpful? What are meant by these terms?

THINK ABOUT IT

Every setting should be designed to effectively connect with its target audience. Both the audience and the culture have to be considered as we attempt to "build bridges" and "turn on lights" for people. We cannot assume that what worked yesterday will work today. Our methods and mediums of communication must be relevant. We must ask questions such as: Who is our target audience? What does the audience need? And, what is the best way to communicate with the audience?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

How can you use settings you are in to communicate God's love? How can you team together with the church to do the same?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. -1 Corinthians 9:22.